



A cabin squatting on the side of a hill; trees leaning back as though afraid of falling into the ravine below; grass green under the brow of a rock as if hiding from a cow that stood in the hollow, ringing her bell; a hawk sailing round and round, darting his covetous, hungry glance at a pigsty whereunder a hen had taken refuge, the gurgle of water pouring over a shelf-like ledge of slate stone; a boy and a girl standing under a tree, dreamily gazing into a blue pool. The month was June, the scene, the backwoods of Kentucky.

"If I was that bass down there."

said the boy, "and you was that perch. I wouldn't let them common fish come a nigh you."

She laughed. "Oh, you'd want to eat me all by yourself."

He gave her a look of troubled reproach. She laughed merrily. "You can't take a joke yet, can you?" she asked.

"Why yet?" he replied.

"Because you've got to be so well acquainted with me," she rejoined.

"Is that a reason why I ought to take a joke?"

"Yes; for I ain't nothin' more than a joke."

"Well then," he said, "I can take a joke—I could take you."

"Oh, could you? But that wouldn't be a joke. It would be awful serious to me."

"Nell, don't talk to me that way. You know why I am stayin' here—you know that if it wan't for you I'd go away somewhere and be a poet. You know the school-teacher said he couldn't learn me any more, and I take it that when Bill Jimison can't learn anybody anything he's goin' to be a poet. Jimison told me that I ought to go away somewhere—said there never

would be any chance for me here. And do you reckon I'd plow over yonder in that blazin' field if it wan't for you?"



"OH, QUIT!" SHE CRIED.

There ain't nothin' in the ground for me to dig out—my fortune and my fame are in the air and the woods."

"Oh, shucks, Sam, why don't you grabble all that foolishness out of your head and go to work. I reckon I've gone to school as much as you have, and I never have thought about bein' a poet."

"Maybe it is because you never have been in love," he replied, half pitifully.

"Maybe so," she rejoined, and then in excitement cried: "Look there! the bass has caught the perch!" And she had not more than said this when he seized her in his arms and passionately, violently kissed her.

"Oh, quit!" she cried. "Don't I tell you! Mother is in the door and will see you. Go away, you—you fool!"

He released her and stood gazing at her. "I despise you," she said.

"Ah, I have souceezed the truth out of you, have I?"

"If you have you put yourself to unnecessary trouble—you might have known it before."

"Yes, I might, for the poet always has been despised."

"Oh, has he? But if that's the case you ought to be loved."

"Nell, you'll force me to hate you."

"I will? But why should you want to make me so happy?" She took up her sunbonnet, which had fallen to the ground, and, holding it by the strings, stood swinging it like a pendulum.

"Do you mean that?" he asked.

"Of course. Why shouldn't I, Sam; you have made me miserable all my life. Yes, you have, now. All the time at school, whenever nobody was lookin' you'd all the time try to kiss me, and I hate to be kissed all the time. Why, you don't know how tiresome it is. There, mother's callin' me, and I just know she's goin' to give me an awful goin' over for standin' round here foolin' with you. Good-by, and I hope I'll never see you again—all the time tryin' to kiss me. Yes-um!" she cried, "I'm comin'."